

PRESENTATION

The present issue completes our fourth year of publication, with ever increasing circulation and words of support. For that, and for the many who have contributed articles and book reviews during these four years, we are grateful.

Since the last issue was devoted to the Hispanic response to the November elections, we were forced to postpone a number of articles on various subjects, and these we have included in this issue. But the question of Hispanic political responsibility and participation has aroused interest, and we have received a number of articles on the subject that we were not able to include in the last issue. These we shall publish periodically in the coming months, thus hoping to promote and continue a dialogue that is crucial both for the Hispanic community and for our Christian obedience.

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The Eucharist: Liberation, Community, and Commitment

Cecilio Arrastía

Exodus 12:8-12

Acts 2:42-47

There are many words used, both in and out of the Bible, to refer to the eucharist. It is the "breaking of the bread," it is agape, it is supper. It contextually bears the Greek idea of anamnesis – which is the reverse of amnesia – and compels us to remember. On the one hand, it is a look at the past. "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you" – verbs in the past tense. "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me" – verbs in the present tense. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" – statement pointing to the future.

These statements open windows into the meaning of the sacrament in different moments in the history of the Christian Church. Notwithstanding, there are three key concepts that go much farther than what is being expressed in the preceding words, and we wish to develop our reflection around these concepts.

Passover, Eucharist and Liberation

It is interesting to note that the Jewish Passover occurs within a context of oppression and that it is the heralding of liberation through the mighty arm of Yahveh. The Biblical canvas looks like a modern painting taken from any particular political situation in our days, which is being determined by a secular oppressive idea. Let us look into this.

In Exodus 5, Moses and Aaron confront the Pharaoh who could pass for any modern dictator, whether of the right or the left. His arrogance and ignorance about the God of Israel might fit into any Marxist treatise dealing with the way that believers in the action of God within history should be treated. Let us listen to the dialogue:

Moses and Aaron, without much ado or hesitation tell him: "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, let my people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness." The reply is very eloquent in its grossness: "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go." Herein lies the absolute denial of God's intervention in history, the ignorance about God's existence. "I do not know the Lord."

But Moses insists, elaborating the concept: "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. . ."

Here we have a struggle between a secular ideology which is suffocating and oppressive and the liberating force of the God Yahveh. If there were any doubt in our minds concerning the oppression and the totalitarianism of the Pharaoh's ideology, let us listen to the tyrant's reply : "Moses and Aaron, why do you draw the people away from their work? Get back to your labors!" What a revealing statement! It is exactly what contemporary regimes practice in their dealings with "religious people." They do not persecute them. They try to use them and if they cannot do this, they design the activities of "productive work" at the day and time when the believers go to the temple, in order to distract their attention and make them concentrate on these secular tasks, giving the impression that what religious people do is NOT PRODUCTIVE.

It is worthwhile to stop for a moment and underline this idea. We have here an anticipation of the ideological struggle posed to us today and of which the Church is quite aware. Here, as in the Fascist and Marxist dictatorships, we can see the State despotically invading the private lives of persons: the state determines everything, even the way in which one relates with one's own God, which, after all, may not even exist!

Authentic liberation is freeing us from the oppressive structure imposed by the secular ideology in order to enjoy the freedom of the "desert," the act whereby we celebrate Yahveh. It is important to note that many of the so-called theologies of "liberation" do exactly the reverse of this process, and attempt at depriving human beings of the possibility of worshiping freely in the desert, shutting them in the prison cell of an ideological structure that is secular and

suffocating. Such a thing is the denial of the model offered us by the Exodus. Those who will ignore that the departure from Egypt was an act of worship to celebrate Yahveh; those who will limit all the process of liberation to mere social-economic components, would be falling into the theological sin of reductionism. Marxism is a form of reductionism. The absolute secularization of the liberation process cancels out the spiritual dimension of this process. And in the Christian dictionary, if the Spirit and the "arm of Yahveh" do not play an important and decisive part, the process gets contaminated and prostituted. The Bible calls this idolatry!

The first concept that identifies the Jewish Passover, and consequently the Christian Eucharist, is that of genuine liberation, i.e., a liberation "to celebrate a feast to Yahveh" in the freedom of the desert.

Passover, Eucharist and Community

We are moving – both in the context of the event that precedes the desert, and in the supper that precedes Calvary – within the core of a COMMUNITY. The participants celebrate these events, functioning within their relationship with a community – in one case, the community oppressed by Pharaoh; in the other, the followers of Jesus Christ, politically oppressed by the Roman ideology. The worshipers of Passover were the Hebrew families residing in Egypt; the attendants to the Last Supper were those who had built a new family around Christ as Lord, Master, and elder Brother. In Acts we read how the "breaking of bread" was done at home. All this focuses on an incontestable fact: this is the feast of the community!

The biblical implications are countless, and directly address our condition as Hispanics in this country.

Firstly, when speaking of community we speak of a "common unity." This authentic unity is given to us around the sacrificial supper – whether it be Hebrew or Christian. Today, more than ever before, we Hispanic Christians have to insist on the necessity of uniting ourselves within the bosom of the Church in order to better serve those who are outside. We have to remember that the strength of the enemy is in direct relation with our division and splitting up in small groups. The Supper is the total, absolute repudiation of the division that we have produced in the body of Christ that we call the Church.

The theme of unity, inspired by the symbol of a parted

bread, is not only fascinating but challenging. We are witnessing a beautiful paradox. The body of Christ is dismembered and fragmented in order to make possible the indestructible unity of this spiritual body which is present in the Church. Thus, he dies to give us life – in the most profound paradox of the mystery of grace – he lets himself be broken, losing his physical unity – in order to give us spiritual and functional life.

But apart from the biblical and theological reality, is the historical reality. If in the Pentecost men and women of very diverse cultures, languages and origins were united, it is urgent that we attain that unity around the same Spirit that united the multitude at Pentecost. Either we live under the sign of Babel, fragmented in spite of using the same language, or under the sign of Pentecost, united in spite of being such distinctive, individualistic entities. The Supper we are celebrating today offers us no alternative: unity is the order of the day. "It is the time of general summoning, the time of marching united, and we will march in close formation, just like silver in the roots of the Andes" (José Martí).

There is another element in this concept of liberation community and the Eucharist. If we separate the achievements of racial justice and others for which we so much yearn from a community of faith, the Kingdom of God becomes a mere humanistic ideology. The Church is not the Kingdom of God, but if we separate from the Church of Jesus Christ the concepts of justice, freedom, equality, elimination of poverty, racism and all the other forms of oppression that we could imagine, then we are making abstractions of all these realities. In the long run what we would be doing would be to change a tyrant of the right for one of the left, and one is just as oppressive and dehumanizing as the other.

Stated this way, we cannot separate the Kingdom of God from the name of Jesus Christ, and we cannot separate the great achievements that Christ proclaimed and incarnated from this mystical body of his that is the Church.

The Church of Jesus Christ as a foretaste and rehearsal of the Kingdom of God is responsible for watching over the preservation of the salvation character of the achievements that the Kingdom proclaims. Individual salvation cannot be conceived separately from the salvation of the world. But world salvation cannot cancel the experience of individual salvation. There is no salvation of the individual if we do not discuss the redemption of the systems that oppress the

individual. The communal nature of the sacrament we are celebrating today compels us to remember that the community of faith which is the Church must keep reclaiming as Christian all the conquests and achievements that have been made in the name of Christ and by the power of the Spirit of God. The rest would be surrendering and turning our backs to essential realities, both biblical and historical.

Eucharist and Commitment

The third concept that rises from the event that we are recalling and celebrating today is that of commitment. Liberation, which is free because of being the product of saving grace, is offered to accomplish a task. And this task is commitment to the struggle, not to serve a secular ideology, but the King of Kings and the Master of Lords: Christ himself.

It will be fitting to recall what happened on both occasions. In relation to the Hebrew Passover, the Bible says that the community has supper with their shoes on, their walking sticks in hand, ready to leave for the desert. Passover was the food for the struggle in the desert. As per the Apostolic Cenacle, it is said that "having finished supper they sang a hymn and started on their journey." In Psalm 23 we are told that the Shepherd "dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." All this points to a fact: the Hebrew Passover and the Christian Supper are the nourishment to confront the desert, which in turn is the cross; or the cross which is the desert. It is the strength to battle the enemies of faith. It is the power to conquer the promised land from which the milk of justice and the honey of peace will flow.

The "nourishment" given to us in this act is the food to make it possible that others – the poor, the marginal, the undocumented, the fugitives from dictatorships of the right or of the left, the victims of materialistic capitalism or of atheistic impersonal socialism – may have clothes and food and education for their children and work for them. Let there be no harm done to human rights so that the whole humanity may enjoy a just and lasting peace.

This struggle on behalf of others implies, furthermore, that our vision of the social-political problems must be global, bilateral, and not unilateral and wilfully mutilated. In other words, we cannot fulfill a prophetic function or fight with integrity if we limit our denunciation to the sins of the regimes of the right. This we should do vehemently, but

without forgetting that the leftist regimes commit such despicable and oppressive sins as those of the right. If we rightly condemn the invasion of a nation by another, we must remember all the countries of the world that have been invaded by foreign troops – from Afghanistan (invaded by a Russian army) to Grenada (invaded by a coalition of American armies). If we speak of freedom we must speak of freedom for all. If we speak of the press, we must indict the regimes that restrict it, be it in the name of democracy or in the name of an assumed liberating revolution. It is immaterial whether the gag is imposed in the United States or in Nicaragua. If we talk of the persecution of human beings, we must be global in our judgement and not unilateral and unfair. A humble and modest Mizquito Indian is just as persecuted as a person who is the victim of the dictatorships of Paraguay, Chile, or Guatemala. Our commitment to the struggle must lead us to an honest objectivity and not to whimsical and subjective selections. Oppression is oppression wherever it is imposed and whoever imposes it, and it is not possible to think of a coalition of Christian thought allied to a system that tends to oppress human beings in the name of an ideology, be it of the right or of the left.

We must be led to all this by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, unless we do want – as the words of its institution well state – to eat and drink the judgement unto ourselves because of not perceiving the body of the Lord.

Conclusion

And we come to the end. In the Gospel there are two images of the Supper. One is given in the cenacle or upper room. The atmosphere is heavy, there are shadows and forebodings of treason –Judas– and of denial –Peter. The Calvary, with its ghastly profile, is already a presence in the life and experience of the Master. His face is affirmed unto Jerusalem and he is ready for the cross.

The other model given to us is the experience in Emaus. It is the Lord himself who breaks bread in Jerusalem, who will also break it in Emaus. But the spiritual state is different. Resurrection has already pierced history. Here we are celebrating a victory, the fulfillment of a hope. The Lord has risen, and upon the exorcism of this victory cry, the apostles will be transformed, resurrecting with the Eternal Resurrected.

To live under the shadow of Jerusalem, without Emaus in the framework, is living in a defeatist spirit and in retreat. It is a cross without victory. It is an absurd denial and a cowardly march into retreat.

To live in Emaus without Jerusalem is to aspire to a crown without a cross; to a celebration without substance or contents. It is triumphalism and madness.

The right formula is to incorporate Jerusalem to Emaus and live knowing that we will suffer, that we will be oppressed, despised and ignored, but that beyond that we will see the light of Resurrection. That we live looking on our present from the future of God, and that with Christ's victory our own victory is sealed and guaranteed.

Resumen

Mostrando el modo en que la Santa Cena se relaciona con la Pascua del antiguo Israel, se intenta elucidar el sentido cabal de la libertad que Dios promete, evitando un "reduccionismo" marxista. Esa libertad ha de llevarnos a protestar contra toda injusticia, tanto la que se comete por parte de la derecha como la que se comete por parte de la izquierda. De igual modo, la Cena ha de relacionarse tanto con el Aposento Alto como con el episodio que Lucas narra sobre la cena de los creyentes con el Resuscitado. La Cena nos lleva a vivir en el contexto tanto de la cruz como de la victoria final.

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La liberación de la educación

Luis Gilberto Collazo

Desde que el colonialismo y el imperialismo han golpeado la libertad, y la opresión y la explotación han reprimido y manipulado la conciencia crítica, la educación como agente de liberación se hace ineludible. La misma vocación humana apunta hacia la realización de la libertad y la práctica de la responsabilidad. El ser humano es ser libre y responsable no sólo ante sí, sino también ante la historia. La realización humana más legítima es aquella en la cual alcanzamos la más amplia y profunda solidaridad humana e intra-histórica. La educación es el instrumento social para adelantar esa solidaridad humana en forma concreta y significativa.

El evento educativo se genera allí donde la persona se encuentra con los límites deshumanizantes y las posibilidades de la creatividad. De este encuentro con el antagonismo y la contradicción, que se dan en su existencia alienante, surge la fuerza creativa y crítica. La educación se da entonces como evento político porque requiere la transformación de las condiciones que limitan la libertad: el colonialismo, el imperialismo, la explotación, la opresión y la alienación. La educación entonces no es legitimación de valores proyectados e impuestos, sino la inversión de esos valores, o la más radical transformación de ellos. En ese sentido educar implica radicalizar y concientizar.

Si afirmamos la educación como práctica de la libertad, entonces la totalidad del aparato educativo tiene que estar preñado de esta. La verdadera democratización se hace condición "sine qua non" del proceso, la estructura, la toma de decisiones, la formulación del currículo y el perfil del maestro y del estudiante. Sin una integral praxis de la libertad, el evento educacional sería domesticante en relación al fundamento de la educación. La libertad no sólo es el contenido, sino también el estilo de esta educación.

La ideología dominante opera para y hacia la duplicidad, la imitación y el "copiar". La educación de la ideología dominante está determinada por la homogeneidad y no por la heterogeneidad, por la similitud y no por la diversidad. El pluralismo le es por lo tanto amenazante, y sólo se tolera dentro de un marco estrecho. Es un pluralismo dentro de la clase dominante o dentro de la clase dominada, pero no más allá de sus limitaciones clasistas. Es por ello que la educación de la ideología dominante corresponde muy bien a la estructura educativa clasista imperante.

Este hecho ideológico se opone indudablemente a una genuina creatividad humana. La "creatividad" solamente se tolera siempre que enriquezca los valores clasistas, pero no cuando los trasciende o transforma. La educación clasista fomenta la creatividad dentro de sus límites. La mitologización toma concreción cuando la ideología dominante utiliza un ejemplo aislado y lo hace un ideal universal. Ejemplo de ello es cuando un oprimido alcanza a ser médico o abogado y se le mitologiza como prototipo de las implicaciones socio-económicas de esa educación.

La educación como práctica de la libertad apunta hacia un permanente proceso de creatividad con una función social concreta, y con una apertura hacia la realización de la persona humana. Aquí se crea para la comunidad y no para garantizar la "ganancia"; se crea para construir un mundo justo y solidario y no para la fama y la explotación. En esto consiste realmente la realización de la libertad. Esta educación es la liberación de la libertad para crear, y crear para transformar.

La educación como práctica de de libertad es un acto profético. Es decir, el evento enseñanza-aprendizaje tiene que estar preñado de **denuncia** y de **anuncio**. Este elemento es característico del acto profético. El imperialismo academicista así como la explotación ganancial del conocimiento tienen que ser denunciados en este proceso. La democratización del conocimiento y la liberación de lo académico tienen que ser anunciadas en este proceso educacional.

Debe estar claro que el maestro no posee el conocimiento, sino que comparte el mismo desde el estudiante y viceversa; el currículo no se impone sino que se construye desde la base social real, y el proceso educacional es patrimonio de todos y no privilegio de pocos. No se trata de negar las particularidades, sino de afirmar las posibilidades colectivas. Finalmente,

este carácter profético de la educación implica un compromiso preferencial con los pobres y oprimidos como sujetos del quehacer educacional.

Este proceso educativo muy bien podemos ubicarlo dentro de la tarea eclesial de educación del pueblo desde una perspectiva teológica. Jesús como crítico de la historia y del ser humano es prototipo del maestro que educa desde la crítica y la problematización. Su enfrentamiento con la realidad social implica un acto político-educativo. La denuncia de los valores opresores a través de la praxis crítica y el verbo antagonizante es clara. Basta con leer los evangelios desde una perspectiva histórico-social. Educar como práctica de la libertad es educar en función de la dignidad humana y de la liberación de la opresión.

Es fundamental como estrategia y táctica educativa que nuestra acción se concrete en reflexión, y nuestra reflexión en acción. Esta metodología es liberadora en su forma y contenido. Como dice una canción chilena, "Yo quiero amar amando". La integración de praxis y reflexión, idea y experiencia, ideal y compromiso histórico concreto, le son fundamentales a la educación como práctica de la libertad.

Desde esta perspectiva, la educación viene a ser instrumento de crítica y problematización dentro de un mundo donde el ser humano es alienado, marginado y discriminado. La educación como práctica de la libertad implica penetrar en el contexto socio-histórico en función de denunciar el antagonismo y las contradicciones que niegan la dignidad humana. Al mismo tiempo, la educación como práctica de la libertad implica el anuncio del Reino de Dios en preferencia para los oprimidos y los pobres. Esto significa que la educación tiene que tener como imperativo una concreta y real liberación y no un carácter neutralizante frente a la opresión y la manipulación.

La realidad autocrática y paternalista de la iglesia tiene que transformarse en una realidad caracterizada por un espíritu de compartir e interdependencia. Esta transformación se hace necesaria a fin de armonizar la comunidad cristiana con esta perspectiva de educación. Esta educación presupone una comunidad de humildad y servicio, de reciprocidad y solidaridad. Aquí aprendemos y conocemos en comunidad, comprendemos y analizamos en comunidad sin patronazgos academicistas de ninguna índole. La realización del "shalom"

se da como resultado de una convivencia liberadora en la comunidad. El "yo" y el "tú" vienen a ser un nuevo y redimido "nosotros". Una cita de Miguel de Unamuno encarna el pensamiento fundamental detrás de estas ideas:

Porque es la contradicción íntima precisamente lo que unifica mi vida, le da razón práctica de ser. Es el conflicto mismo, es la misma apasionada incertidumbre lo que unifica mi acción y me hace vivir y obrar.¹

Con esta perspectiva me propongo plantear que la educación como práctica de la libertad supone y requiere la liberación de la educación misma. Esta liberación de la educación debe darse dentro de las siguientes perspectivas de criticidad: la reformulación del pensamiento, la subversión del pensamiento, y la responsabilidad del pensamiento crítico, dentro de un contexto de justicia.

Desde una perspectiva teológica la esperanza, el amor y la paz deben estar fundamentados en la práctica concreta de la justicia. Esta perspectiva teológica podemos tomarla de las más significativas tradiciones bíblicas. La justicia dentro de esa tradición se caracteriza por su concreción, su fuerza redentora, su inclusividad, y su relación radical con la liberación. La justicia, lejos de alienarnos de la concreción de la vida humana, nos realiza y ubica allí donde la vida humana es destruida y aniquilada. Allí donde la dignidad de la vida es negada se está atentando contra la justicia de Dios. Debemos enfatizar la vinculación directa de esta concepción de la justicia con la existencia y la liberación humanas. La creación legítima de un espacio vital donde podamos realizarnos plenamente como humanos es la vocación general de la justicia divina. Esta vocación implica el acto liberador y la promoción de la libertad. Sin embargo, debemos señalar que la promoción de la libertad sin el establecimiento de la justicia resulta ser un proceso incompleto y ahistórico. La práctica de la libertad plena tiene que ir vinculada a la presencia de la justicia en la realidad humana.

Esta justicia liberadora implica además el acto redentor. Se ofrece libertad a los cautivos y liberación a los oprimidos. Por tanto, la justicia es la negación y el repudio de una situación de pecado, y la apertura a la posibilidad de una auténtica reconciliación. Viene a significar la redención de la persona humana de un individualismo conservador y reaccionario y la incorporación de ésta a una comunidad humana de solidaridad. La inclusividad de esta justicia radica en su

objetivo final de liberar para reconciliar, y en la creación de una auténtica familia humana. Como poder liberador la justicia asegura el desarrollo de la unidad humana y la reconciliación de la humanidad. Me atrevo así a afirmar que la justicia, como agente educacional, es una condición absoluta y necesaria para la unidad y la reconciliación internacional y universal. La liberación supone el establecimiento de la justicia como prólogo a cualquier intento de reconciliación y unidad.

Desde esta perspectiva la reformulación del pensamiento requiere orientar políticamente la educación en el sentido de desmitologizar la educación clasista tradicional y conservadora. Dicha desmitologización supone el redescubrir el auténtico sentido de los conceptos justicia y libertad. Debemos percatarnos que generalmente la ideología dominante mitologiza las metas, objetivos y motivos de la educación con el fin de garantizar la legitimización y permanencia de su ideología. La orientación política de la educación significa verla como un proceso que transforma y supera todas las barreras impuestas por la orientación clasista, y la desmitologización de su estrategia educacional.

La "despolitización" de la educación ha sido un mito que se ajusta adecuadamente a un interés ideológico-político tradicional. Es por esto que en el caso de Puerto Rico todos los intentos de formular una filosofía puertorriqueña de la educación han fracasado. La "despolitización" es realmente una politización domesticante y neutralizante. La necesidad de reformular está precisamente orientada hacia un proceso permanente de creatividad socio-política. La politización de la educación, como reformulación de un pensamiento educacional dirigido hacia la creatividad, es lo que propongo como punto de partida. Politizar significa incorporar en la educación el análisis crítico como método y fundamento del análisis de la realidad. Este análisis conlleva el proceso ético-político de asumir posiciones y lograr decisiones. En esta perspectiva la opción niega la neutralización, y el compromiso anula la ambigüedad.

Dentro de esta reformulación, el pensamiento tiene una función socio-política concreta, y está profundamente comprometido con la realización humana. El pensamiento tradicional y conservador queda sujeto al status quo. Reformular el pensamiento significará la creatividad política en función de la creación del espacio humano donde la vida esté caracterizada por la práctica de la justicia y la solidaridad. Cuando hablo de

politización estoy indicando que la educación debe estar orientada hacia la justicia y la humanización. El pensamiento tendrá como fin primordial el formar un ser fraternal en oposición a formar un ser competitivo, lo solidario en oposición a lo individualizante.

La nueva concepción del pensamiento demanda una educación para la justicia así como una educación justa. La sacralización de la "libertad" ha llevado la educación al reduccionismo intelectual. Ya lo hemos señalado: la libertad sin la justicia es una concepción de mediocridad. El pensamiento deberá ser orientado hacia la denuncia de la injusticia como agente deshumanizante dentro de la sociedad y dentro del sistema educacional. La denuncia significa el señalar y protestar aquellas áreas donde el pensamiento queda reducido en manipulación, desinformación y superficialidad. Es también retar la aceptación y la implementación de éste dentro de las condiciones anteriormente señaladas.

Redescubrir y reformular el pensamiento significará indicar y estar en contra de la pobreza, la desigualdad injusta, la orientación ganancial de la vida, el racismo y el sexismo como elementos que niegan la libertad humana y un futuro de auténtica libertad.

Mi segunda propuesta para la liberación de la educación consiste en la tarea de subvertir el pensamiento. Nuestra responsabilidad de subvertir el pensamiento implica la liberación de la educación en favor de la justicia. Esta liberación significa desafiar la hegemonía de un pensamiento de corte autoritario y paternalista. El paternalismo y el autoritarismo niegan la apertura a la justicia y la creatividad. La perspectiva liberadora refuerza el pensamiento concreto y creativo, superando así el énfasis teórico y abstracto del pensamiento tradicional. La persona humana queda liberada en la medida que supera el énfasis teórico y participa en la encarnación misma del pensamiento.

Este esfuerzo liberador implica una actitud de resistencia ante la manipulación estructural e institucional. Es liberador porque tal resistencia significa la afirmación de la dignidad humana y del derecho a pensar. Lo subversivo consiste en deselitizar el derecho al pensamiento profundo y auténtico, que generalmente se le adjudica a una élite. Es subversivo porque no se permite la violación por medio de la manipulación del derecho a un pensar libre y crítico. Es en cierto sentido la

subversión del pensamiento contra el pensamiento. La diferencia consiste en que uno está orientado por los intereses de una ideología clasista y el otro intenta afirmar amplia y profundamente la dignidad humana.

Otra de las dimensiones de esta subversión del pensamiento como liberación de la educación está relacionada con la educación moralista y legalista. Tanto el debate sobre la educación "moral" como el otro sobre la "oración" en las escuelas responden a esa visión educacional. Generalmente esta concepción vincula la formación del pensamiento a una conducta individual obediente y normativa. La realización y la dignidad de la persona humana se reducen por definición a estos dos principios. Esa perspectiva educacional confunde y manipula el concepto de moralidad, relacionándolo con la obediencia y repeto a la "ley". La subversión implicará vincular el pensamiento liberador con una moralidad asociada con la justicia y la liberación humana. Es de esta manera que la realización y la dignidad humanas se definen en términos de solidaridad y compromiso, y no en términos de moralismo y obediencia.

Como subversión también debemos implicar la integración de la praxis y la reflexión. Aunque esta idea de integración ha contado con cierto reconocimiento en la estructura educativa, no ha sido lo suficientemente incorporada al proceso educacional. Nuestro conocimiento de la realidad no debe quedar reducido a una interpretación teórica sino, más aún, práctica. Aprendemos desde nuestra praxis, desde nuestro encuentro concreto, cara a cara, mano a mano con el mundo y la humanidad.

La liberación de la educación requiere una integración radical de praxis y reflexión, razón y emoción, análisis y creatividad, afirmación y criticidad, concreción y universalidad. Por largo tiempo nuestro pensamiento dogmático-tradicional ha dicotomizado estas realidades en el evento educacional. El resultado de esta práctica ha sido la alienación de la persona humana de sí misma y de la concepción pluralista de la realidad. Es lo que podríamos también señalar como una visión muy deshumanizante y estrecha de la realidad. Liberación significaría apertura a una pluralidad responsable y a una realidad humanizada.

La sacralización del pensamiento en muchas direcciones y en diferentes maneras ha significado un culto al pensamiento

no comprometido. Debo aclarar que este vacío de pensamiento, y este proceso educativo "no comprometido", en realidad significan el no compromiso con los oprimidos y el compromiso, explícito o implícito, con el opresor. La subversión del pensamiento requerirá redimir el compromiso de la utilización ideológica de la supuesta "objetividad", y la legitimación y creación de un pensamiento comprometido. A partir de nuestra perspectiva, donde la educación se compromete con la justicia, la educación enfrenta el reto ético de ser liberada de la concepción falsa de "no comprometerse".

Por último, deseo plantear como elemento liberador la responsabilidad con el pensamiento crítico. El pensamiento sin compromiso ni criticidad se reduce a una mera neutralidad, apatía e irresponsabilidad. Nuestra responsabilidad con el pensamiento crítico tiene como meta fundamental la liberación del pueblo, la educación, la cultura, la realidad social y la historia de su sujeción al dogmatismo, a la ideología opresiva, a la dicotomía, al racionalismo, al cientificismo, al pensamiento dialéctico frío y sistematizado y a la tiranía de un pensamiento elitista. Tenemos la responsabilidad de reconocer que el pensamiento es en primera instancia patrimonio legítimo del pueblo. Lo educacional tiene que ir dirigido a hacer de la educación un medio "limpio" que sirva como recurso para la justicia, la libertad, la liberación, la paz y la solidaridad. Es en esta dirección liberadora que Miguel de Unamuno señalaba:

La inteligencia es para la vida y pertenece a la vida y desde la vida nace, y no la vida para la inteligencia.²

La responsabilidad de acercarse críticamente a la realidad no es una opción sino el fundamento sobre el cual la educación se torna instrumento de liberación y transformación. La justificación acrítica de la realidad es irresponsabilidad histórica. La historia demanda nuestra acción y reflexión responsables a fin de poder adelantar una comunidad participante de la creación histórica. El ejercicio de esta responsabilidad incorpora en el devenir histórico al ser humano como agente de cambio y creatividad. Una educación acrítica contribuye a alienar y anular al pueblo como fuerza histórica. El vacío crítico actual se debe precisamente a una educación que no fomenta el "ser responsable". Una educación donde educando y educador se limitan a admitir y justificar no podrá formar una persona capaz de "responder" y "comprometerse" con la formación de un mundo nuevo y mejor.

Necesitamos de una educación capaz de iniciar al ser humano en una actitud crítica que le haga capaz de responsabilizarse por el acontecer social y político. La responsabilidad no queda reducida al cumplimiento de normas o la afirmación de unos valores, sino que se traduce en una crítica que se hace práctica, y en una práctica que se hace crítica. La crítica debe llevar a trascender los parámetros de un sistema dado y forjar la concepción de nuevas dimensiones de realización personal y convivencia social. Somos responsables de educar para la crítica y desde la crítica, siempre en función de la implementación de sistemas justos y humanizantes.

La educación debe darse siempre como instrumento para la consecución de un mundo nuevo y mejor, pero nunca como instrumento de realización personal individualista. Una educación para la responsabilidad es una educación que contribuya a la incorporación del pueblo a la tarea de hacer una historia que resulte digna de escribirse y recordarse. Crasa irresponsabilidad es aquella en la que un pueblo es educado para vivir de espaldas a su tiempo y su espacio histórico-vital. Es legítima responsabilidad de un pueblo reconstruir la educación a través de la apropiación del análisis crítico para un auténtico proceso de subvertir y reformular el pensamiento. La liberación de la educación nos asegura la fuerza liberadora de la educación.

Summary

Education must be liberated from its ideological ties to the dominant class and the status quo. In order to do this, it is necessary to begin by realizing that supposedly "objective" thought and education, while claiming to be neutral, are in fact in favor of the existing order. In a truly liberated education, the critical spirit will be fostered, and thought will be subverted by thought itself, in order to return it to the people for the task of working out their own history.

Notas

¹Del sentimiento tragico de la vida (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1967), p. 193

²El caballero de triste figura (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1963), p. 140

Let the Dead Gods Bury Their Dead

Justo L. González

Some years ago, a great hue and cry was raised—mostly by journalists—over the phrase "God is dead." Then the theology of the death of God, like its own God, languished and died. This was to be expected, for although these theologians made some very significant points, after the funeral of a loved one there is little for survivors to do but return home and attempt to build life anew.

The limits of God-talk

The crucial question, however, is not whether or not God exists, but who or what this God is whose existence we either affirm or deny. Some gods are better dead than alive. Humankind did not lose a great deal when Huitzilopochtli and his cohorts lost their power to require human sacrifice, or when the crocodiles of the Nile lost their divinity. The death of many gods has spelled life to countless human beings. Therefore, let us not be too hasty in our condemnation of those who say that the "god" worshipped by much of our civilization is dead. Perhaps that "god" too is an idol whose day has passed. And perhaps biblical believers ought to rejoice at the funeral of such a god.

The question of the existence of God has meaning only insofar as we clarify what we mean by "God"—and even then, it may well be that the nature of God is such that by definition such existence can never be proven, but only accepted (or denied) by faith. Indeed, the so-called proofs of the existence of God involve from their very outset an implicit definition of what they are attempting to prove, and their conclusions can never go beyond the parameters set by those definitions. Thus, for instance, if we follow the cosmological proof whose classic example is Thomas Aquinas' "five ways," and argue that everything that exists has a cause, and that therefore there must be a first cause of all things, we have at best proven only the existence of a first cause, and not necessarily of the God of Abraham. Likewise, even if Anselm's ontological argument had no logical flaws, and the very notion of "that-than-which-no-greater-can-be-thought" did necessarily include its existence, such an argument would only show that "that-than-which-no-greater-can-be-thought" does indeed exist; but it

would still be necessary to show that such a being is identical with the Parent of Jesus Christ and the Ruler of the Church.

This leads us to an obvious conclusion: any God whose existence can be proven is an idol. The difference between the God of Israel and the idols of the surrounding peoples is not that the latter are visible and God is not. When Scripture mocks and condemns idols made out of wood, what it ridicules and rejects is not the wood out of which they are made, but the very fact that they are made by humans who then turn around and worship their own creation. Christian apologist Aristides, in the second century, spoke thus of the pagan gods: "shutting them up in temples, they worship them, giving them the name of gods, and they carefully guard them so that thieves may not steal them, without realizing that a guardian is greater than that which is guarded, and that the one who makes a thing is greater than the thing." Any human creation which is raised to the level of the divine is an idol. This obviously includes all sorts of images of beasts and human beings made out of wood and metal. But it also includes intellectual images made out of ideas and elucubrations. Therefore, any proven god is an idol. Inasmuch as any proof can only prove that which its parameters allow, the shape of that which is proven has been devined previously and surreptitiously by the one offering the proof. Into this mold the notion of god is cast, just as the pagans of old cast their idols in the molds of smiths.

Nor is anthropomorphism necessarily the sign of idolatry, or of a "more primitive" understanding of God. In fact, all language about God must necessarily be anthropomorphic, inasmuch as it must be human language. We have no ultra-human categories which which to refer to God. It is not only when we speak of the "hands" of God that we are using anthropomorphic language. When we speak of the "will" of God, although no longer speaking as if God had a body, we are still within the bounds of anthropomorphism. We may attempt to overcome this difficulty by resorting to analogy, and therefore say that God is "like" a parent, stressing at once the similarities and the differences between God and human parents. Such language may be very helpful. But it does not free us from the charge of anthropomorphism, for only insofar as God is "like" a parent does that assertion convey any meaning. Or we may seek to describe God by projecting that which we consider positive to the umpteenth power: God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, etc. But, apart from the

fact that we have no idea what we mean by "omni," what we are actually doing in such cases is simply exaggerating human characteristics that we consider desirable, and therefore we are still bound by anthropomorphism. Finally, we may follow the opposite tack, and speak of God in purely negative terms: God is impassible, infinite, uncreated, etc. But all that this means is that God is like nothing that we know—and to say that something or somebody is "like nothing" is hardly to say anything at all.

Anthropomorphic language should not scare us. We have no other language. We have no other categories. If there is a God who has chosen to reveal Godself to us, such revelation must come to us in terms and categories we can somehow grasp—that is, in human terms and categories. This in turn means that the fact that a theological statement uses anthropomorphic language is no valid reason for rejecting it—unless one is willing to abandon God-talk altogether. Failure to recognize this basic and simple fact has produced—or at least supported—grave distortions in Christian theology, for Scripture certainly speaks of God in anthropomorphic terms, and theologians have often felt compelled to improve on the Bible at this point.

Acceptance of anthropomorphic language about God, however, is much more than a mere inconvenience to which we must submit given the limitations of our mind and language. Beyond that general human reason for anthropomorphic language, there are two specifically biblical reasons for the unashamed use of it. The first is our central confession that God's supreme self-disclosure has come to us in a human being, Jesus of Nazareth. The incarnation must be the basis, not only for our doctrine of redemption, but also and above all for our doctrine of God. The incarnation is not, as we often suppose, a last minute remedy for human sin. It is much more than that. As Irenaeus and other early Christian theologians would say, it is the very goal of creation. And later, during the iconoclastic controversy, John of Damascus would show that some of the objections of the iconoclasts were based on a limited view of the significance of the incarnation for our understanding of God. Indeed, argued the Damascene, the objections of the iconoclasts are no longer valid once "God in His bowels of mercy became in truth human for our salvation, . . . and after He lived on earth and dwelt among us, worked miracles, suffered, was crucified, rose again and was taken back to heaven." The incarnation, in which God has become human,

requires the rejection of any argument that God cannot be depicted in human terms. Whatever other reasons there may be for rejecting the use of icons, the argument based on the absolute transcendence of the divine has been refuted by God in the very act of incarnation.

The other biblical reason for our acceptance of anthropomorphic language is the doctrine of the *Imago Dei* —the image of God in the human creature. This doctrine, which early Christian theologians such as Irenaeus tied closely with the incarnation, affirms that we have been created after the divine image. If that is so, the use of anthropomorphic language is validated by the very fact that humans are theomorphic. In other words, so-called anthropomorphic language about God is not grounded in the presupposition that God is like us, but rather in that we are like God.

How Does Scripture Speak of God?

Clearly, the Bible never attempts to speak of God in Godself. On the contrary, the Bible always speaks of God in relation to a creation and a people. God is not depicted as "the prime unmoved mover," as "pure actuality," or as "absolutely simple." When the Bible speaks of God, it speaks of creation and redemption. When it refers to God's will, it does so in terms of a call to human obedience. When it speaks of God's "heart," it deals, not with the inner workings of the Godhead, but with God's purposes and feelings —yes, feelings, why not?—for humans.

Nowhere does the Bible say that God is impassible. On the contrary, there are repeated references to the divine anger, love, and even repentance! God wrestles with Jacob and haggles with Abraham. God is like a stern judge who will be moved by the persistence of a widow. God is love. Thus, if there is a sense in which the God of the Bible can be described as "immutable," this has nothing to do with impassibility or ontological immobility, but rather with the assurance that God's "steadfast love endureth forever."

Furthermore, the God of Scripture is an active participant in human history. God calls Abraham out of Ur, and leads him in his wanderings. God breaks the bondage of Israel in Egypt. God smites tens of thousands of Israel's enemies. God raises judges to liberate Israel, and punishes the nation for its iniquity. God sends prophets and conquerors to rebuke the people and its rulers. God takes human flesh, and is crucified in it. God promises a reign of justice and peace, a new

Jerusalem where God will forever dwell with the people. In every one of these sentences, God is the subject, the active and sovereign ruler of history.

And yet, the God of the Bible is also the object, and even the victim, of history. God does not rule the world with an iron fist, as Pharaoh ruled over Egypt or Pinochet rules Chile. God does not destroy all opposition with a bolt from heaven. Nor is opposition a mock enemy created by God —like the military dictator who sets up an opposition party in order to claim that his rule is democratic. Although all things are created by God, God's free creatures have set up an empire of evil which denies and challenges the divine power —sometimes even in the name of God. Evil is real and powerful. It cannot be dismissed or explained away as a necessary step in a great cosmic plan. God will indeed use it to achieve the divine goals, and perhaps those goals will so use evil itself that Christians who sing the traditional Easter Eve hymn are justified in speaking of the "blessed sin" that has earned us so great a salvation. But in spite of this God does not will evil. God does not will injustice, which is the greatest of evils. Furthermore, inasmuch as God suffers with the oppressed, God suffers oppression and injustice. This fact, well attested throughout Scripture, finds its clearest expression in Jesus Christ, in whom God is carried to and fro by human beings whose victim God becomes. If being a minority means being subjected and victimized by forces which one does not control, there is a sense in which God is a minority!

Resumen

El "dios" que muchas veces lleva tal nombre no lo es en verdad, sino que es tan falso como los dioses de los paganos a que la Biblia se opone, y que los primeros cristianos se negaron a adorar. La muerte de tal "dios" no ha de causarnos dolor, sino gozo, si de veras tratamos de basar nuestra fe en las Escrituras. El verdadero Dios no necesita que le defiendan, ni que se le describa en lenguaje supuestamente sofisticado. El Dios de la Biblia, al contrario, es ante todo "el Dios vivo," que se nos da a conocer en forma humana en Jesucristo. Por tanto, no hemos de temer el "antropomorfismo", como si fuera un grave error. Mucho peor es confundir el Dios verdadero con el "dios" de una sociedad que lo utiliza para sus propios fines.

